

present year; but although some of them have undoubtedly bred, we fear that our climate and soil will prove—not too cold, for these birds can stand severe dry cold—but too wet for them to establish a permanent footing. On this point we give an extract of a letter, dated August 13th, from an excellent observer, Mr. R. Service, of Dumfries:—"Sand Grouse still continue on the estate where they first appeared. There were more than sixty of them at one time, but they gradually dispersed, and there is now only a small flock of nine left. I was over the ground yesterday with one of the keepers. Only seven were shot, and these within the first few days after arrival. The utmost protection has been extended since, and although the ground was as suitable as possible in this country, none bred—two pairs were observed to separate as if for breeding-purposes, but they also disappeared. So that if plenty of keepers (who were all much interested in them), most suitable ground, plenty of feeding-ground, the utmost rest and quiet, did not induce them to breed, the birds themselves were to blame, or possibly the cold *wet* summer we have had."

LIV.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

We have received the following letters addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis':—

British Consulate, Noumea,
May 27th, 1888.

SIRS,—It is long since I had the pleasure of sending you any ornithological news from this far-away land, but I am now in a position to add a bird to our native fauna, and hasten to record it. This morning I received from Mr. Cecil Vivian, of H.M.S. 'Diamond,' now in our harbour, a specimen of a Cormorant, the first that has reached my hands, though our friend M. Grasset has described birds from the northern end of the island which, no doubt, were of this genus (*cf.* Ibis, 1882, p. 542). We were much surprised on examining it to find that it was the Little Black Cormo-

rant, *Phalacrocorax stictocephalus*, Bp., of Gould's 'Birds of Australia,' vol. ii. p. 495, for M. Marie states that the bird he obtained was *P. melanoleucus*. It is therefore an entirely new addition to the New Caledonian fauna, and our best thanks are due to Mr. Vivian for so kindly placing the bird at our disposal. From information received, it appears that the bird (a young one) was shot while sitting on a branch of a tree (mangrove probably) in a small river on the west coast, not far from this town. Mr. Brewer, another officer of the same ship, tells us that two days previously he saw two birds, apparently of the same species, but did not shoot one, being in the pursuit of nobler game in the shape of "Black Ducks" (*Anas superciliosa*). A Mr. Saxton, who knows the Cormorant well from his residence in New Zealand, informs us that at the north end of the island he has frequently seen "Shags," as he calls them, with white sides to the face and throat, and some white on the lower part. He says they were half the size of the great New-Zealand Shag, and frequented an inland swamp, perching on trees. This is probably the *Ph. melanoleucus* procured by M. Marie, so that we may boast of two Cormorants belonging to the New Caledonian ornith.

Yours &c.,

E. L. LAYARD.

Langass Lodge, Lochmadde, North Uist,
June 13, 1888.

SIRS,—It may be of interest to ornithologists to know that there is reason to suppose that the irruption of Sand Grouse has this year, as on a former occasion, extended to the Outer Hebrides. Dr. John Mackney, in a letter to my factor here, writes, on 25th May:—"I have just seen on the Machair here (Benbecula) what I believe is a covey of ten Pallas's Sand Grouse. I first saw a solitary bird on the moor near the house here a few days ago, and although I saw it two or three days in succession, I did not get a good view of it, but I thought of Pallas's Grouse from its appearance. To-day, however, I met with no less than ten of them together, and although they were a little shy, hiding themselves in the sand

when observed, and getting up quickly, something like Partridges, but flying more like Golden Plovers, I managed to get a good sight of them, and unless they are Pallas's Grouse I do not know what they are. They are light grey in colour, with blackish breasts and short legs, and when flying their tails seem short and pointed. They utter a sharp 'whirr, whirr.' My brother shot one here more than twenty years ago in the same place where I saw these birds, as mentioned in Gray's work on British Birds."

Yours &c.,

J. W. P. CAMPBELL-ORDE.

Zoological Society's Gardens,
Aug. 3rd, 1888.

SIRS,—Allow me to correct an error in my paper "On the Classification of the Striges," published in the July number of this Journal. There is a mistake in the description of woodcut fig. 4 (p. 339), the foot of *Bubo* there figured being the *left*, not the *right*.

Yours &c.,

FRANK E. BEDDARD.

Bremen, Aug. 27, 1888.

SIRS,—In Mr. Ridgway's lately-published "Review of the Genus *Psittacula*" (Pr. U. S. Nat. Mus. 1887, p. 529) I am much surprised to find no mention of my *P. spengeli* (P. Z. S. 1885, p. 614, pl. xxxviii.). Now I consider the species described by Mr. Ridgway as *P. exquisita* to be my *P. spengeli*, which name has, of course, priority.

As to *P. cyanochlora* of Natterer (*l. s. c.*), I cannot quite reconcile it with any of Mr. Ridgway's species, but I am inclined to believe that it is the same as his *P. deliciosa*. If Mr. Ridgway's views are correct, the females of all the *Psittacule* have their wings without any blue. The very great extent of the subalar cobalt-blue in our specimen of *P. cyanochlora* seems to show that it is not a female or

a young bird. I believe it to be adult and to be a good species.

Yours &c.,
G. HARTLAUB.

180 Stockwell Park Road, Brixton, S.W.,
August 31st, 1888.

SIRS,—The following notice of the capture of *Siurus noveboracensis* in lat. $47^{\circ} 22'$ N., long. $18^{\circ} 50'$ W., may interest some of the readers of 'The Ibis,' as I believe it is the first time the bird has been taken so near Europe.

When returning from New Zealand in the sailing-ship 'Northumberland' in 1886, I noticed, on the morning of August 26th, a small bird flying about the decks and settling on the spars. As we were then off the Bay of Biscay, I took our visitor to be a European Warbler blown off the mainland or the Azores, and not having much knowledge of the Sylvicolidæ, I did not take any particular interest in our visitor, which during the day was pursued by cats and steward's boys. On turning in, I was surprised to see a small bird sitting on the rope which closes the shutters in heavy weather, and catching it in my hand, I recognized it as the one we had seen flying about during the day. Little knowing what a good bird I had, I put it in a cardboard box for the night, intending to give it its liberty in the morning, but on opening the box found the bird had died during the night, possibly of hunger, as on skinning it I found no trace of food in the stomach. To those interested in migration, I may add that the weather on August 26th was misty, with squalls of rain and wind from W. to S.W. From the Meteorological Reports extending over an area between lats. 4° – 46° N., longs. 22° – 40° W., from August 1st to date of capture, I find the same sort of weather prevailed, with heavy gales of wind on the north and west sides of the given area.

It was not until this year, on looking over my skins, I thought of ascertaining the name of my Warbler, and looked through Gould's and many other works on the 'Birds of Europe,' and not finding it mentioned, the idea of having

captured a good bird dawned upon me. While staying in Hampshire lately I showed it to my friend Mr. C. Bygrave Wharton. He, failing to recognize it, proposed sending it to Prof. Newton, whom I now much thank for kindly identifying it as *Siurus noveboracensis*, a well-known North-American Warbler.

Yours &c.,

HUGH R. RABBETTS.

Extract from a Letter from Dr. Burmeister to Mr. Schlater, dated Buenos Aires, 25 June, 1888.—"In possession of the copy of the first volume of 'Argentine Ornithology;' I send you my best thanks, and wish to make a remark on the species of *Furnarius* which, following Döring and Cabanis, you call *F. tricolor* (Arg. Orn. i. p. 170). This name was applied by Döring to a bird which he believed to be identical with a species of the same genus (*Furnarius*) noticed in my 'Reise' (vol. i. p. 159), as observed at Rio Quinto, but not obtained. Some years later, when in Buenos Aires, I received a collection of skins from Bolivia, and found therein a specimen of the same bird which I had seen living in Rio Quinto. This species I named *F. tricolor*, and sent a specimen to Giebel at Halle, who described the new species in his 'Zeitschr. f. d. gesammte Naturw.' (xxx. p. 17) under the name I had given to it. Döring believing my bird to be the same as the species of *Furnarius* obtained by him at Cordova, sent specimens of it under that name to Cabanis. But the two species are entirely different, and I propose to call the species discovered by Döring *FURNARIUS CRISTATUS*, on account of its crested head."

Assumption of Male Plumage by Female Birds.—Mr. J. H. Gurney writes:—"In this year's 'Ibis' (p. 227) a Domestic Hen of my father's is mentioned which assumed the Cock's plumage and afterwards lost it again. She has laid a great many eggs this summer, but his poultryman tells me they are useless, as he set two clutches with no result, and afterwards tried mixing them with no better success; he describes them as being very yellow compared with those of an ordinary Fowl.

“The Bearded Tit (*Pamurus biarmicus*) may be added to the list of female birds which are known to occasionally assume male plumage. In the summer of 1882 a Bearded Tit, two years old, in Mr. J. G. Keulemans’ aviary, hatched five eggs and moulted, during which operation she suffered much from cold and stiffness, and when she recovered her plumage it was partly that of the male (*cf.* ‘The Field,’ Sept. 14, 1872).”

Anniversary Meeting of the British Ornithologists’ Union, 1888.—The Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists’ Union was held at the rooms of the Zoological Society, 3 Hanover Square, on Wednesday the 16th May, at 6 P.M., Mr. W. T. BLANFORD, F.R.S., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting having been read and confirmed, the Committee presented their Report, in which, after an explanation of the prosperous state of the finances, it was announced that there had been two losses by death, viz. Messrs. Heywood Jones and J. C. Hele, and two by resignation, viz. Mr. Henry Buckley and Capt. A. W. M. Clark Kennedy. The total number of Members was stated to be 204, viz. 174 Ordinary, 1 Extraordinary, 9 Honorary, and 20 Foreign Members.

As another series of ‘The Ibis’ would be completed with the present volume, the question of Editorship had been taken into consideration by the Committee, who regretted to say that Mr. Saunders was unable to continue as co-Editor; but that Mr. Selater has expressed his readiness to undertake the editorship alone for the next series.

After some discussion, Professor Newton proposed, “That the Report of the Committee be received, and that on the completion of the current Series—the Fifth—of ‘The Ibis,’ another Series—the Sixth—be commenced, with Mr. Selater as Editor.” Mr. Salvin seconded this proposal, which, on being put to the Meeting, was carried unanimously.

The accounts having been passed, Professor Newton then proposed that, “as regards extra copies, contributors to ‘The Ibis’ should be placed, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same footing as authors of papers in the ‘Proceedings’ of the Zoological Society.” This was seconded and carried. The following new

Ordinary Members were then balloted for and declared duly elected :—

Oliver Vernon Aplin, Bloxham, near Banbury, Oxon.

John Duncan Cameron (late Capt. R.A.), Lowwood,
Bethersden, near Ashford, Kent.

James Carter, Burton House, Masham, Yorkshire.

Walter Chamberlain, Harborne Hall, near Birmingham.

William Wilfrid Cordeaux (Lieut. 2nd Dragoon Guards),
Sialkote, Bengal, India.

William Evans, F.R.S.E., 18 A Morningside Park, Edinburgh.

Herbert Knight Horsfield, Oakfield Terrace, Headingley,
Leeds.

Frederick J. Jackson, 13 Westbourne Sq., London, W.

George Thorne Phillips, Wokingham, Berkshire.

Mervyn Owen Wayne Powys, 22 Malcolm St., Cambridge.

Eustace Radclyffe, Hyde, Wareham, Dorset.

Robert H. Read, 8 Great George St., Westminster, S.W.

Charles Joseph Wilson, 16 Gordon Sq., London, W.C.

The President and Secretary having been re-elected, Mr. Salvin was elected on the Committee in the place of Mr. W. T. Blanford, who retired by rotation. The Officers for the year 1888–1889 will therefore be as follows :—

President.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LILFORD.

Secretary.

H. E. DRESSER, Esq.

[Editor.

P. L. SCLATER, Esq.

Committee.

E. CAVENDISH TAYLOR, Esq.

E. BIDWELL, Esq.

O. SALVIN, Esq.

A special vote of thanks was then proposed by Mr. W. E. Clarke, and seconded by Mr. R. B. Sharpe, to “ Mr. Howard

Saunders for his exertions during his tenure of office as co-Editor of 'The Ibis,' and duly carried. After a vote of thanks to the Chairman, proposed by Mr. W. E. Clarke and carried by acclamation, the Meeting adjourned. The Annual Dinner, held at the Café Royal, was attended by twenty-six Members and guests.

OBITUARY.—We regret to announce that Mr. HENRY STEVENSON, F.L.S. &c., died at Norwich on the 18th of last August. His family, originally from Nottinghamshire, had for upwards of a century been proprietors of the old Conservative county journal, 'The Norfolk Chronicle,' the management of which Mr. Stevenson only resigned when compelled thereto by ill health in 1886. Educated at King's College School, London, he early displayed a taste for field-sports and a keen love for natural history; in 1855 he was elected Honorary Secretary to the Norfolk and Norwich Museum, a post which he held till his death; and in 1864 he was amongst the first additions made to the original number of the Members of the British Ornithologists' Union. His chief interest centred in the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, of which he was one of the founders, and its President in the year 1871-72. No year passed without contributions from his pen to the 'Transactions' of that Society, the last being "On the Vocal and other Sounds emitted by the Common Snipe," read at the Meeting held on the 27th of March last. The pages of the 'Zoologist' also, for many years, bear testimony to his diligence and accuracy as an observer. To a succession of domestic bereavements was added, since 1875, acute bodily suffering; and it is not surprising therefore to those who knew him well that his chief work, 'The Birds of Norfolk,' vol. i. of which appeared in 1866 and vol. ii. in 1870, should remain unfinished. To those who enjoyed his friendship, Mr. Stevenson was a delightful companion; his powers of observation seemed almost intuitive, while his genial nature endeared him to all.